

Vic Government announces \$1 million investment in harness racing

The Victorian harness racing industry, local breeders and country clubs will benefit from a \$1 million investment announced today by the Andrews Labor Government as part of the Victorian Budget 2018/19.

The funding support was welcomed by Harness Racing Victoria's Chairman, Dale Monteith, who thanked the Andrews Labor Government for its ongoing commitment to the Victorian trots industry.

"We are pleased the Andrews Labor Government, Treasurer Tim Pallas and Minister for Racing, Martin Pakula continue to recognise the importance of harness racing to Victoria," Mr Monteith said.

"Harness racing provides \$435 million per annum of economic value to the state and creates the equivalent of 4000 full-time jobs, the majority in regional areas."

Off the back of today's announcement, Harness Racing Victoria's CEO David Martin confirmed that between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019, HRV would waive the registration fee for Victorian-bred foals from a Victorian mare and a Victorian standing stallion. During this same period, HRV will also reduce registration fees for foals from a Victorian mare by an interstate or overseas stallion.

"We've listened to feedback from the industry and with this one-year stimulus from the State Government, we are taking action to reduce costs for breeders to encourage a vibrant breeding industry," Mr Martin said.

Importantly, today's funding will also facilitate infrastructure upgrades at country clubs.

"Country clubs play a vital role in our industry and this additional funding will enable them to make much needed improvements," Mr Martin said.

A portion of the funding support will also be allocated for marketing activity to promote harness racing, including the 2018 Inter Dominion, which returns to Victoria for the first time in 10 years.

"The Inter Dominion is the race that the champions of our sport want to win. We want to encourage the public to feel the thrill and excitement that this event will bring," Mr Martin said.

The million-dollar commitment follows the Andrews Labor Government's funding announcement last year to bolster HRV's integrity department, while harness racing continues to benefit via the Victorian Racing Industry Fund.

"The turn-around in performance for Victorian trots is already under way and this funding support will help as we continue to climb back to the prominent position our sport has traditionally had in the Victorian community," Mr Martin said.

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